

TAB

17 February 1956

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MEMORANDUM FOR:



SUBJECT : Cash vs Medals

Pursuant to our discussion of 13 February 1956 a canvass was taken on 15 February, to determine the attitudes on this subject that would be expressed by former members of the Armed Forces who have been awarded one or the other of the highest U. S. decorations; the Medal of Honor, the Distinguished Service Cross or its equivalent the Navy Cross.

The following question was put to seven members of the Army and Navy Legion of Valor who are identified after the answer.

"The time is 1919 or 1945, as the case may be. You have been told that you have been awarded the DSC or Navy Cross. At that time, if you were given your choice would you have preferred to receive \$1000 in cash or would you have chosen the decoration?"

Answers were received as follows:

| <u>Individual</u> | <u>Service</u> | <u>Period</u> | <u>Cash</u> | <u>Decoration</u> |
|-------------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Enlisted man      | Army           | WW I          | Yes         |                   |
| " "               | Army           | WW I          |             | Yes               |
| " "               | Army           | WW I          |             | Yes               |
| Officer           | Army           | WW I          |             | Yes               |
| Officer           | Army           | WW II         |             | Yes               |
| Officer           | Army           | WW II         |             | Yes               |
| Enlisted man      | Navy           | WW I & II     |             | Yes               |

Two Army enlisted men did not know of the existence of the DSC before it was presented to them. The fact that General Pershing decorated one man set the incident above price; the other admitted that from ignorance he would probably have taken the cash, if it were offered. A World War II combat disabled West Pointer thought the question silly, saying in effect (expletives expurgated) "Does someone think that extra performance can be bought?"

Following the spirited debate on this question, the following was asked:

"The time is now 1956 and as you know you are one of the relatively small number of surviving holders of the DSC or Navy Cross. If the whole thing could be done over, would you now prefer to have had \$1000 and no decoration, or would you, based on your experience during the intervening years choose the decoration instead of the cash?"

The reaction was unanimous; in retrospect none of the seven would prefer cash to his decoration. The reasons advanced were mainly based on the prestige factor of the decoration, the exclusiveness to some degree that each believes the decoration confers on him and to phrase it differently the satisfaction enjoyed by reason of having been deemed worthy of the decoration.

/s/

  
Chairman, CIA Honor Awards Board

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Appendix IV

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